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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 006442

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/09/2015

TAGS: PHUM ASEC IS UZ GOI EXTERNAL

SUBJECT: UN THIRD COMMITTEE: ISRAEL EXPLAINS PROBLEM WITH  
UZBEKISTAN RESOLUTION

REF: A) TEL AVIV 6384 (NOTAL) B) STATE 204646

Classified By: Political Counselor Norm Olsen for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) Following reftel (B) demarche, Israeli MFA Deputy Director General for Central Europe and Eurasia (A/S-equivalent) Mark Sofer contacted poloff to discuss Israeli difficulties with the Third Committee resolution on Uzbekistan. According to Sofer, Israel does not intend to co-sponsor the resolution and plans to be absent during the vote. Sofer noted that the GOI fully shares the USG's view of the human rights situation in Uzbekistan, but believes that the Karimov government would retaliate against any Israeli support by withdrawing security from the Israeli embassy in Tashkent, forcing its closure. He claimed that the Uzbeks had previously withdrawn all police from guard duty at the embassy after they took issue with an interview by the Israeli ambassador following the July 2004 bombing attacks in Tashkent.

2. (SBU) Sofer said that he plans to discuss Israel's concerns with EUR during a visit to Washington during the week of November 29, but wanted the USG to be aware of the GOI's position beforehand. He added that Israel plans to co-sponsor and vote for the resolution on Turkmenistan.

3. (C) Comment: Sofer is undoubtedly under intense pressure from FM Shalom to keep the embassy in Tashkent open. Shalom has made the expansion of ties with states that have Muslim majorities his top public priority. End comment.

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